



BARNARD CASTLE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1939.

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R.C.F.Smith. M.D., B.S., D.P.H.,  
F.R.I.P.H..

Medical Officer of Health.  
Medical Superintendent of  
Isolation Hospital.  
School Medical Officer.

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1939, a year, owing to the World Crisis and the Declaration of War, of vastly increased legislature with resulting heavy calls upon the personnel of all health and administrative services.

Owing to the necessity for strict economy, the Ministry of Health has advised curtailment of all reports, hence only a skeleton outline of essential and urgent matters appertaining to public health will be mentioned.

Since September the Report Centre at the Rural Office has been manned by at least thirty-four volunteers, both day and night, a minimum of four being always present. The purpose of this is that should an air raid occur, messages would be received from Wardens at the out-posts, with the result that the staff at the Centre would at once initiate the proper measures for civil defence. Volunteers are from both the Urban and Rural areas.

Much credit is due to those who have, sometimes at great inconvenience to themselves, conscientiously and promptly attended at their allotted times in order to perform any task that an Emergency might require. Altogether, for the combined areas, we have an army of A.R.P. Workers nearly 1000 strong, who, we should be proud to know, have given many hours of their time to this subject without any monetary reward.

All constructive policy has been postponed, by an Order from the Government, since the commencement of hostilities.

Reginald C. F. Smith,

Medical Officer of Health.

A Synopsis of Chief Changes and Events during the year 1939.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS. The Rateable Value has increased by £350 on the previous year.

LABORATORY FACILITIES. After the outbreak of War, a branch of the Laboratory Service of Kings College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, was moved to the Barnard Castle School. The purpose of this is to assist in the prevention and control of Infectious Diseases occurring among troops, evacuees and civilians.

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICES. Following upon the outbreak of War, Clinics were opened at Barnard Castle, Butterknowle and Evenwood. These are attended to by your Medical Officer of Health.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES. Up to the moment there have been but few cases of infectious diseases among the evacuees. Spotted Fever made its appearance among the troops and civilian population. The onset of this disease was not unexpected, however, and the adoption of preconceived steps, such as prompt isolation of patients and near contacts, swabbing of near contacts, school closure, display of bills indicating certain precautions to take, the placing of picture halls &c. "out of bounds" to troops, and extra spacing of beds in billets, was sufficient to bring the epidemic to a speedy end.

Measles and Whooping Cough were made notifiable towards the end of the year.

Scarlet Fever, which had been endemic to an extent beyond the normal, began to decline and has continued to do so since the Spring.

Diphtheria showed a satisfactory decline. During the year there were only two cases.

The incidence of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases was below the average.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS. There was nothing outstanding in the numbers in both categories. The death rate of infants is still pursuing a satisfactory decline.

WATER SUPPLIES. As a means of preventing any outbreak of water-borne diseases, due to the influx of troops and evacuees, the various water supplies are examined by bacteriological methods at regular periods.

SLAUGHTERING. Following upon the outbreak of War centralised slaughtering was initiated for the whole of the area. All cattle, sheep, and pigs, the meat of which is intended for human consumption, are slaughtered at Barnard Castle. Inspection of all meat slaughtered, and the premises, are regularly examined by the officials of the Barnard Castle and Startforth Councils. Since the inception of this method of slaughtering, the premises have been greatly improved as to general cleanliness and the work is now carried out without the danger of causing meat to become unwholesome.

A.R.P. During the year your officials have trained in First Aid, Anti-gas, Report Centre Administration and other branches of A.R.P. some 140 volunteers. This army consists of Wardens, First Aid Parties, Ambulance Drivers, Car Drivers for sitting casualty cases, Rescue Brigades, Administrators of the Report Centre, Decontamination Squads and others. Collective and Individual Training were given to all. One of the results of Mobilization of the higher age groups has been the gradual depletion of the male volunteers. Men in good health are urgently required for some of the above-mentioned groups of the Casualty Services.



An up to date, well equipped, voluntary First Aid Post is situate at the A.R.P. Depot, Dunelm Square. Facilities exist for the treatment of anti-gas casualties and injuries requiring surgical attention. Dr. and Mrs Ward have kindly organized this post with great credit to themselves and to their some 25 volunteers.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD. There is nothing untoward to report in this connection. No outbreak of disease during the year occurred in connection with food and milk supplied.

EVACUEES. The Billeting arrangements for some 400 evacuated children was carried out by the Reception Committee, composed of the Womens Voluntary Service, School Teachers and others. The work entailed for the proper preparations of this are enormous. The choice of suitable billets, the prevention of overcrowding, the provision of beds in many cases, medical attention and hostel accommodation are only some of the many problems that beset this work. As is usual in small towns, certain difficulties were experienced, but, fortunately by night-fall everyone was safely in a suitable billet without any serious incident. Much credit is due to those who assisted to carry out this difficult task.